

Equal Pay Day Statement

On June 10, 1963, President John F. Kennedy signed into law the Equal Pay Act, which established the principle of equal pay for equal work for women in the workforce.

In 1963, women on average made 59 cents for every dollar earned by men. Today, women on average make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men nationally, and 85 cents for every dollar in California. In fifty years we made some progress on closing the pay gap. But the pay gap today still amounts to an \$11,084 pay difference between full-time working men and women nationally, and \$7,464 in California.

This wage gap robs families of income and keeps many in poverty. And this burden continues into retirement as women who have worked for less throughout their careers are forced to live on lower pensions and Social Security benefits.

For African American women and Latinas the pay gap is even larger. African American women on average earn only 64 cents and Latinas on average earn only 55 cents for every dollar earned by white, non-Hispanic men.

Achieving equal pay for women has been one of the top priorities of Democrats. In January 2009, our first major act of business was passing the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which became the first bill signed into law by President Obama. It restored the right of women to challenge unfair pay in court.

Enacting the Paycheck Fairness Act (H.R. 377/S. 84) is equally important. The Paycheck Fairness Act strengthens and closes loopholes in that 1963 law, which has never been updated. I am an original cosponsor of this important bill, which would provide effective remedies to women who are not being paid equal wages for doing work equal to their male counterparts and protect employees from retaliation for sharing salary information with their co-workers.

In both the 110th and 111th Congresses, our Democratic-led House passed the Paycheck Fairness Act – but the bill has been blocked by Senate Republicans. It's time for Republicans to finally stand up for women and help pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Equal pay is not simply a women's issue – it's a family issue. Families increasingly rely on women's wages to make ends meet, and with less take-home pay women have less for the everyday needs of their families – groceries, rent, child care, doctors' visits.

On the 50th Anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, I'm proud to support legislation that can get us to a place where every American, regardless of gender, earns equal pay for equal work.